WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. An apparatus for processing mail; comprising:

   an input bin for receiving a stack of envelopes containing document;

   a cutter for cutting an edge of the envelopes;

   an extractor configured to open each envelope and present the

   contents to an operator for manual removal; and

   an imaging device for scanning the extracted documents to create a

   set of image data.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, comprising:

   a sensor for detecting whether the documents are extracted from an

   envelope; and

   a system controller to control the flow of envelopes, such that the

   envelope is retained at a pre-determined location until the

   . sensor indicates that the documents have been extracted.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the extractor comprises a pair of

   opposing arm configured to pull open the envelopes to present the

   contents to the operator.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 comprising a non-volatile storage medium for

   receiving and storing the image data.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging device comprises an

   optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding

   to the extracted documents.

6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging device comprises a

   magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data

   corresponding to the extracted documents.

7.   The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging device comprises:
      a optical imaging device for obtaining optical image data corresponding
            to select extracted documents;
      a magnetic imaging device for obtaining magnetic image data
            corresponding to select extracted documents; and
      a processor operable to analyze the image data obtained from the
            optical imaging device and the magnetic imaging device to verify
            the accuracy of the image data.

8.   The apparatus of claim 1 comprising means for identifying the
      transaction-type for documents extracted from an envelope.

9.   The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the imaging device is positioned
      adjacent the extractor such that an operator positioned at the extractor
      can readily feed extracted documents from an envelope into the
      imaging device.

10.   A method for processing envelopes containing transactional
      documents; comprising the steps of:
      extracting a transaction from an envelope;
      determining the transaction-type;
      providing output relating to the transaction type;
      scanning the extracted documents to create image data for the
            documents; and
      correlating the image data with the transaction-type.

11.   The method of claim 10 comprising storing the image data on a non-
      volatile storage medium.

12.   The method of claim 10 comprising the step of retaining the envelope
      at a pre-defined position until the transaction has been extracted from

the envelope.

13.   The method of claim 12 comprising the step of determining whether the transaction is extracted from the envelope, and controlling advancement of the envelope in response to the determination of whether the transaction is extracted.

14.   The method of claim 10 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain optical image data corresponding to the documents.

15.   The method of claim 10 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic image data corresponding to the documents.

16.   The method of claim 10 wherein the step of imaging comprises the steps of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic and optical image data, and the method comprises the step of analyzing the optical and magnetic image data to verify the accuracy of the image data.

17.   A method for processing envelopes containing transactional documents, comprising the steps of:

feeding envelopes from an input bin into a transport path;

opening the envelopes along an edge;

extracting a transaction from an opened envelope;

retaining the envelopes at a pre-determined position during the step of extracting;

transporting the transaction to an imaging station adjacent the pre-determined position; and

scanning the extracted documents to create image data for the documents.

18.   The method of claim 17 comprising the step of storing the image data on a non-volatile image medium.

19.   The method of claim 17 comprising the step of determining whether the transaction is extracted from the envelope, and controlling advancement of the envelope in response to the determination of whether the transaction is extracted.

20.   The method of claim 17 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain optical image data corresponding to the documents.

21.   The method of claim 17 wherein the step of scanning comprises the step of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic image data corresponding to the documents.

22.   The method of claim 17 wherein the step of imaging comprises the steps of scanning the documents to obtain magnetic and optical image data, and the method comprises the step of analyzing the optical and magnetic image data to verify the accuracy of the image data.

23.   The method of claim 18 wherein the step of opening the envelopes comprises cutting the envelopes along at least an edge, and the method comprises the step of pulling apart a front face of the envelope from a back face of the envelope to present the transaction to an operator for extraction.